



# BUS BUZZ



IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT STUDENT TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

OCTOBER 2008

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### School Bus Safety Week

National School Bus Safety Week will be October 20-24, 2008. This is a unique opportunity for transportation and school administrators across the country to promote the outstanding safety record of school bus transportation.

The idea of a school bus safety week first began in 1964 with Dick Fisher of the Centralia School District in Orange County, California. Since then, it has grown into a national event, and this year the U.S. House of Representatives has unanimously passed H.R. 498 to honor the goals and ideals of National School Bus Safety Week.

The National Association for Pupil Transportation organized a school bus safety contest as part of the week. The theme for this year's poster contest is "Avoid Harm, Obey the Stop Arm." Information for this contest can be found at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/transport/iapt.asp>. IAPT will judge the posters from

#### NEW FACE, NEW NAME: PLEASE VOTE!



We have decided to change the name of the newsletter. Below are the top three options and we want your input! Please cast your vote by e-mailing your favorite name of the three choices below to [atracy@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:atracy@sde.idaho.gov) by November 21st. The new name will take effect in our December 1st newsletter. Thank you and look forward to hearing from all of you!

- **Bus Hub**
- **Bus Bugle**
- **Bus Traveler**



**Visit our website at**  
[www.sde.idaho.gov/site/transportation/](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/transportation/)

each district and then the winners will be entered nationally. Posters from each state will be judged by the NAPT as part of this celebration.

To emphasize school bus safety week, many districts hold extra activities. You may consider teaming up with a neighboring district to help reduce the amount of work required.

### Some suggestions of activities that you can use are as follows:

- ▶ Run your annual school bus emergency evacuation drills during safety week.
- ▶ Contact your local law enforcement agency and ask them if they will participate in school bus stop and school zone monitoring.
- ▶ Notify all district staff of this special week. Encourage extra cautious driving and bus safety vigilance during this week.
- ▶ Stage a bus and driver at school parent's nights or PTA meetings to allow parents to see all of the safety features on the school buses.
- ▶ Hold a transportation "Open Garage" and invite parents or district staff to visit your facility and see what you and your staff do on a daily basis to transport children safely and efficiently. Provide a handout on your safety record or list some impressive safety statistics.
- ▶ Hold a school bus inspection competition with another district.
- ▶ Distribute safety materials to your students. Various materials can be obtained online and/or vendors.
- ▶ Encourage drivers to wear school colors or black and yellow during safety week.
- ▶ Hold an essay contest and ask students to write about the importance of school bus safety and ways they can keep their bus safe and help the bus driver every day.

- ▶ Invite your local fire department to "smoke" the inside of a bus and hold evacuations for drivers and district personnel.
- ▶ Invite parents, children and community members to write "thank you" notes to bus drivers.
- ▶ Invite parents to review safety rules with their children. Allow them to ask questions about the rules and stress the importance of following ALL rules.
- ▶ Issue your own press release to local papers and media. A sample press release has been included that you may feel free to use.
- ▶ Invite media to events your school holds.

Hopefully, you will make school bus safety week, October 20-24, a very important part of your year. If timing is a problem, try to fit it in when you can—we earn immeasurable points by being proactive with our safety and publicity efforts. Take this opportunity to let your customers know what you do to provide them with quality and safe service.

On behalf of all our partners in student transportation safety, have a safe and memorable School Bus Safety week.

— Brad Jensen

## Heartfelt Losses

Paul Perry passed away on August 18, 2008. Paul had been a member of the Bonner County and Lake Pend Oreille school districts, and State Department of Education's student transportation teams for over 23 years. Paul served as a district trainer as well as a state trainer and was well recognized and respected across the state of Idaho in both roles.

He started as a driver, driving a route morning and night and his kids were part of his family. He could and would tell you



### REGIONAL MEETING DATES:

**Region 1** October 29th

**Region 2** October 22nd

**Region 3** November 6th

**Region 4** October 28th

**Region 5-6** October 15th

### REGULARLY SCHEDULED NEWS LETTER

Starting this year we will begin putting out the News Letter on the below listed dates. An e-mail with a link to the news letter will be sent out on or around that date leaving room for a couple of days to be late due to weekends and office scheduling.

**September 1**

**December 1**

**March 1**

**May 15**



all about their achievements, growth, and talents. Paul was a great story teller and he always had the bus shop laughing at the antics of his bus family. Many Students have relayed to us the personal interest that Paul took in their lives. From the quiet reassurance to a troubled child to the high-fives for achievement, every student knew they had a friend and an advocate in Paul.



## School Bus Safety Week

September 18, 2008

Dear Transportation staff,

I invite you to join the Idaho State Department of Education in celebrating School Bus Safety Week on October 20- 24, 2008. I am pleased this important week has become a nationally recognized event. It is a week that should be celebrated throughout all parts of Idaho, not just the transportation community.

We often celebrate the important work and dedication of Idaho's teachers and students. I think we also need to recognize the important contributions the transportation community makes to education in Idaho. Safe bus rides to and from school are a necessary part of our education system and help make our communities wonderful places to live. The theme this year is "Avoid Harm, Obey the Stop Arm." Help us to pass along this important message to all Idahoans.

Thank you for getting our children safely to school every day and making our communities safe places to live. You play a vital role in the personal and academic success of Idaho's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Luna".

Tom Luna  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Eventually Paul decided to become a trainer of future bus drivers. When transportation director, Carol Brown left our district for Caldwell School District, Paul found his calling. He began training drivers in the summer of 1993. For several years, he drove his route morning and afternoon, training mid-day and summers.

He took every additional training he could find including the state Train the Trainer and the California Highway Patrol School Bus Academy in 2000. Paul's training techniques were innovative and his enthusiasm for our industry was contagious. He became a state trainer and began teaching at the state trainer classes

and teaching at the IAPT conference.

The transportation department wanted a "Buster Bus" and Paul spearheaded a drive to get one. They held fund raisers, sold candy and Paul twisted corporate arms until they had one! Then Paul took the Buster show on the road. He and his able assistants went to the county fair to each elementary school and any place he could wrangle an invitation. He was the voice and the brain of Buster (he loved chasing his assistants with Buster much to the delight of his audience.)

Paul was an "Operation lifesaver" instructor and taught Railroad crossing awareness informing everyone of the power and the danger of trains.

In 2004, Paul became a full time trainer. He hated leaving his "kids" but his training had blossomed into a career. He became known to school bus transportation departments across the state of Idaho as a man with answers to training problems, a willing ear, and as a friend.

In the last four years, Paul was not only the trainer and "Favorite Uncle" of the bus shop; he was most famous for being the voice of the morning dispatch. With his theatrical flair, he made the morning trip announcements and sub lists better entertainment than the rock and roll radio station! We all have pictures of him in our minds; holding Panda the Border collie on his lap, wearing a first graders bunny ears and hopping around the office; (he burned the picture we took, sorry you can't all see it!) He almost got Rod McKnight arrested with a fake bomb in Idaho Falls! Many of you have your own stories of Paul, each greater than the last.

Even in the last months of his life, he would go into the office to insure everything was running fine and that "his" bus drivers were given constant and updated training. His great worry was his

program and ethics wanted to be sure they would not slip because he was not there.

Paul's courage and example were an inspiration of what we all might aspire to become.

— *Virginia Overland*

Dale Maslonka better known by some as "The Polock" also passed away this last summer. Dale was an institution all by himself; he was a school bus technician and driver trainer. He drove school buses, logging trucks, semi-tractors, heavy equipment, farm equipment, and just about anything else with a steering wheel. He was an engineer and inventor, a mentor to anyone new to transportation and a friend to all who knew him. He would tell you that he had been in the transportation business for almost 60 years and he had. His knowledge about transportation and vehicles in general would have filled volumes. He never looked or acted his age; he was always laughing and was one of the best story tellers I have ever known, and they were always true. Dale was a big man in more ways than you can count. Dale's passing left a pair of boots that will never be filled and friend who will be missed.

— *Ray Merical*

## Spud Break: One Hot Potato



Say "Idaho" and the first thing most people think of is the famous potato. Any history of Idaho would not be complete without considering the history of the potato industry.

As many of you are heading back to the classrooms, some of the districts are heading out to the fields for the annual potato harvest break.

Eight School Districts in Southeast Idaho are letting school out for two weeks

the end of September and the first week of October so students and staff can help area farmers harvest their potato crop.

The students and staff will change from there school clothes to work clothes as they go to the potato fields, they will be running potato harvesting equipment, driving trucks or sorting potatoes in the potato cellars. There is always something to do. The days get long as they start early in the morning and run late into the night, and some never stop running.

As the use of computers has steadily increased in the potato industry for optical sizing and grading functions and machines fill consumer-size bags controlled by "electronic brains" to get the weight of the filled bags exact without underweight's and a minimum of overweight's, the actual need for students is in question.

Most school officials agree the need for students and faculty to help with the potato harvest is becoming more of a tradition then a need. In fact, no one really knows how many farmers depend on students and faculty to work in the harvest or how many of them actually do.

For the districts that have an annual potato harvest break, whether its tradition or not, they all look forward to it.

— *Hank Povey*

## Looking For New Bus Drivers



ideas that may help you find the people

As you start a new school year, are you having trouble getting enough drivers to fill all your routes and be substitutes for your regular drivers? If so here are a few

you are looking for.

First, you need to get the word out that you are looking for drivers. We suggest you advertise in the local newspaper, school newsletter, flyers, church or community bulletin boards, or by parking a bus along the side of a road with a banner stating you are looking for drivers.

If advertising does not work then maybe you should try actively recruiting drivers. Are you going to the local PTA meetings, shopping centers, companies that are downsizing or closing, or state employment offices? Have you thought about the local civic clubs, Elks, Lions, women's clubs and the AARP employment programs? Other possibilities to consider should include job fairs, ball parks, flea markets, police and fire personnel.

When recruiting, there are some things that you can do to increase the likelihood of finding new employees. Use positive, upbeat recruiters with enough experience to be able to answer most questions a potential employee might have. Ensure they act and dress in a professional manner. If possible, your recruiter should be able to do some initial screening and interviewing while recruiting. They should deal with one potential applicant at a time.

Have handouts that will describe your organization, why they should consider becoming an employee and the process to become an employee. The process to obtain a CDL license, i.e., written test, road test, where it is done, how long it takes, background check, drug testing, motor vehicle license check, physical, and who pays for what costs. Are you union or non-union? Do I need to join, and if so what are the costs? Training hours for class room and behind the wheel with copies of training and CDL manuals they can look at. Hours that they will be working whether full or part time, hours per day, pay scales, benefits, starting and quitting

times, and how to and from school routes, field and sport trips are assigned.

The goal is to provide as much detailed information upfront to allow candidates to self-screen, and also structure realistic expectations in the event they choose to pursue employment with you.

Make sure their first impression of you and your offer is one that will leave them with a positive outlook of your operation if they decide to apply. Even if they do not apply right then they may decide to come back later or even spread the word to other potential candidates.

If they turn in an application ask them if everything on the application is true. Then schedule an interview at a later time, preferably at the same time or before the first bus is scheduled to leave in the morning. If they are willing to be there that early and they actually show up you can be fairly sure they are truly interested in the job. You need to be on time also, greet them by name, and act like they were expected and welcome.

If you use these ideas and really get the word out to the community that a position is available, it is more likely that you will have success in finding enough drivers to cover your routes.

— *Hank Povey*

## Summer Training

This has been one of the busiest summers for the SDE Student Transportation Division in our history as a division of SDE. SDE staff, state and contracted instructors trained 184 business managers, supervisors, clerks, and superintendents at our financial workshops, 109 technicians at our tech workshop, and over 1200 driver trainers and drivers at our school bus drivers workshops. Feedback on all of the workshops was really good with pretty

much everyone liking the regional school bus drivers workshops. We have already met with your state student transportation steering committee and have begun planning for next years workshops. If you have any suggestions contact your regional SDE specialist or steering committee member as soon as possible so we do not miss out on the wants, needs and/or ideas of anyone.

— *Ray Meral*

## DRIVER TRAINING WORKSHOPS

During the summer of 2008 in workshops held across the state, over nine hundred trainers and drivers received training in “Bullying.” This workshop adapted itself as it progressed around the state.

Guest speaker, Officer Rob Fowler from the Ada County Sheriff’s office, is a resource officer covering several Ada county schools. His presentation primarily covered “what our youth” are dealing with in terms of the influences in their lives that may enhance or effect behavior. Covering topics like the internet, television, music, gang appeal, peer pressure, wanna-be’s, home life, or lack of positive influence, he explained different behaviors that effect, the “bully” issue. Whether you are a victim, bully, friend or foe, watcher or pack member, it affects behaviors and potential outcomes.

He spoke to us about “building bridges” in the schools we serve. We should aggressively pursue contacts with key personnel in our schools because building these bridges will provide a foundation to which we may better understand and hopefully address how much we care and move toward a safer situation for all.



### On Going Training:

State Department of Education is still strongly encouraging all drivers in the state to receive "Operation Lifesaver" and the second phase of "School Bus Watch." Given this goal, each region is encouraged to coordinate with neighboring districts in hosting or holding these training topics. This should be coordinated with SDE as well as with your regional State trainer.

### Up coming Training topic:

If you have a training topic that you would like to revisit or have heard of and are interested, please contact your steering committee member or SDE specialist.

— **Brad Jensen**

## Technicians Workshop

This summer SDE held their Technicians workshop at BSU again this year. We had a good turnout of technicians from around the state. We saw some familiar faces and some new ones and we felt like the workshop was well received this year by everyone that attended. Tom Garrison and his crew from Lake City International were in attendance. Matt Wallace, service manager for Lake City International in Boise, did an excellent job with the overhead run demonstration. Some of the technicians got their hands dirty in that class. Brian Wiggins, service manager for Lake City International in Twin Falls, presented a class on engine diagnostics, troubleshooting and maintenance. Gary Bowler presented a class on the high power hydraulic brake system. Some of the technicians that I spoke with really got some good information from Gary's classes.

Special thanks to Tom Garrison and IC Corporation for the donation to BSU of the DT 466 engine.

**Greg Bryson and Perry Trujillo** from Bryson's Blue Bird Sales in Salt Lake City, Utah presented classes on electrical wiring, wiring diagrams and multi-plex wiring. John Vaughn did a class on the use of multi-meter use and multi-plex wiring. Kammie Ingalsbe from Cummins presented classes on ISB fuel systems, electrical ECU systems, and touched on the regeneration systems that will be coming.

Jason Gruerrero, from Smith Power Service in Boise presented classes on the Allison transmission. He did a good job considering he was informed the day before that he was going to do the class. It seems there was a mix-up. Jason rose to the challenge and covered some questions that the technicians were asking.

**Mark Weeks**, from Western Mountain Bus Sales in Nampa presented classes on glass replacement and rear suspension. Some of the technicians got their hands dirty in those classes, too.

**Daren Clark**, from Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solution and Pat O' Hara from Precision Alignment, presented classes on tire wear, inflation and basic set-up and adjustment for steering components.

Wednesday, July 16th SDE hosted a picnic at Julia Davis Park Shelter #1. We had a good turnout for the picnic. I think that everyone had plenty to eat. Brad, Hank, Matt and Ray cooked up some good stuff. By the way Matt: don't tell Ray, but I don't think the black specks in the beans were pepper.

I would like to thank all of the instructors for donating their time to attend and present the classes. The most difficult part of setting up this workshop is being able to give the instructors enough information so that they can put together a presentation that fits your needs. We have already started thinking about next

years Technicians workshop. I need to have input from the technicians as to the class topic that they would like to have presented so that we can fulfill your needs. We are planning on using BSU again next year. I would like to get more hands on classes set up, but with the size of our group that is very difficult to do. So this year before we are out and about doing our reviews visit with your regional people, please let them know what topics you would like to have presented so that they can relay the information to us.

— **Doug Scott**

## Reminders

### CHECK YOUR BUS!!!

How many times have we heard "Always check your bus for missed or sleeping students at the end of each route?" It may seem that we have heard it way too often but how many times have you read the headline "Missing elementary student found sleeping on school bus in transportation parking lot," sometimes hours after the end of the route? I have read at least six similar headlines since the beginning of school this year and one student was in the same situation on two separate occasions. Some children are frightened to the point that they won't get back on a school bus and parents are upset. Some parents are demanding drivers be fired and filing lawsuits against school districts, contractors and drivers. Most drivers say it was an accident; the student was lying down asleep in their seat and they did not see them when they got off the bus.

It very well may have been an accident, but it is one of the most preventable accidents a school bus driver has to contend with. Even if you do not have

a child check system on your bus that requires you to walk to the back of the vehicle each time you shut it off, how long does it actually take to do it anyway? It takes little enough time that it offsets the consequences of leaving a student behind when you leave the bus at the end of the route, and even for the weekend. It only takes a second to remember and a minute to make the check. Let's all make sure we "take the time to check".

— Ray Merical

## Draw String Hazards

Students are still getting caught in entrance doors and being drug by their bus. Have You Checked for Draw String Hazards on Your Bus? If you have not, you should because you do not want to be added to the list of those who should have but did not. It is easy. Just take the Handrail Inspection Tool and pull it along between any surfaces within the entrance way of your bus that a student might get a drawstring or strap from a coat, backpack or other piece of clothing caught in. If you haven't been provided with one, check with your supervisor. They are easy to make, here is a recipe.

The tool can be used to check the placement of trash cans, emergency equipment along aisle or step well/handrail in determining drawstring hazard.

For more information on this tool and its use: check NHSTA "school bus handrail handbook contents".

— Ray Merical/Virginia Overland

## "The Way You Act"

If you look unkempt, speak rudely, slump in the drivers seat and do not give any acknowledgement or assistance to passenger, they will presume, and

rightly so, that you have a poor attitude toward your job and yourself. But, if you speak politely, sit with proper posture, look professional, and offer any and all assistance, it will be presumed that you have a good attitude and take pride in the job and yourself. The way you act affects many aspects of your work:

- ▶ A driver's attitude towards the passengers helps to determine whether the public will have a good or bad impression of the employer.
- ▶ A driver's personal grooming habits are important because first impressions are often based on a person's appearance.
- ▶ A clean, well maintained bus is a sign the driver takes pride in his or her work.
- ▶ A driver's overall reputation in the community affects the public's confidence in him or her and therefore in the transportation system.

A driver should exercise the following good manners:

- ▶ Courtesy and kindness.
- ▶ Recognize needs of others.
- ▶ Give others the benefit of the doubt.
- ▶ Avoid gossip, keep a confidence.
- ▶ Be honest and loyal.

*Compete with yourself, not with others.*

*Source: ISDE, Classroom curriculum.*

— Virginia Overland

## What's on Your Feet, Mules?

Woman receives eight month suspended sentence and seven years driving ban after hitting fitness instructor. Judge ruled woman's stiletto ankle boot had contributed to her losing control of vehicle. She was not driving a school bus. A stiletto ankle boot sounds painful and the question is: should it be illegal footwear for driving?

Not illegal, but definitely inappropriate.

Webster defines "appropriate" as specially suitable or compatible.

After receiving several questions regarding appropriate footwear for driving a school bus, I have compiled the following information:

### THE HANDRAIL INSPECTION TOOL:



The inspection tool is a standard 1/2" hex nut measuring 3/4" across the flats. This nut is tied to 1/8" thick cotton cord measuring 36" in length with overhand knots. The drawstring should have a minimum of 30" when tied to the nut and attached so that a pull of at least ten pounds does not separate the nut from or break the drawstring.

**Classroom Curriculum:** Section eleven wear shoes with good support.

**Behind the Wheel:** Instructional considerations Stress in a positive manner the need to wear appropriate clothing.

**Google:** "Proper driving footwear." Wearing Mules (not the long eared type) is hazardous because they have no backs to them. Flip-Flops (for us old timers "thongs") and other shoes without adequate ankle support can lead to the foot slipping off the pedal or missing the pedal altogether. Special scientific research found that flip-flops are the most dangerous footwear for driving. High heels, including stilettos, pose the same problem. Open toed shoes pose a similar problem, in that the open edge can catch on the pedal when moving between pedal applications. Keep in mind the mass of your driving shoe, some boots have such bulk that contact may be made with more than one pedal.

**Conclusion:** wear closed toe shoes with at least a heel strap and good traction on the Sole of the shoe. The sole should not be too thin and not too bulky. Boots should not completely stop ankle movement.

Check the condition of the pedals themselves, rubber should be secure and no metal should be showing. A combination of damp shoes and “shiny” pedals are putting you and others on the road at risk.

Check your district/contractor policies. We will be adding this to our topic list for Steering committee review.

— Virginia Overland

## Bus Capacity

We continually field complaints about school bus capacities the first few weeks of the school year and this year has been no different. They are usually due to unexpected loads and usually take a week or two getting them balanced out by adjusting routes, adding buses, etc. Idaho Code 33-1508-2-c states, “No school bus shall be operated at any time in excess of its maximum occupancy as determined by the manufacturer. Occupancy at no time shall exceed three (3) persons in a seat.” Even though Idaho Code allows for three passengers to a seat that does not make it practicable in every instance. In most cases it is not practicable to put three high school students in a seat and in many instances not three middle or Jr. High students. Hopefully most districts will likely balance out high school loads to a maximum of two per seat; however, sometimes that takes a while to accomplish and in the short term three per seat is legally allowed. However, we would not like to see that happen on a long term basis for high school students. Standards for Idaho School Buses and Operations page

71 paragraph 7 also state “No school bus shall start in motion before all passengers have been seated. The driver shall require each passenger on the bus to be seated in a manufacturer’s school bus passenger seat.” This does not make allowances for students to sit on the floor of a bus because of overloading, even on a short term basis. If you have too many students on your bus to put each one in an approved seat, you are to request another bus to relieve the situation. You are assuming an enormous liability if you are transporting students anywhere while not seated in an approved seat. A good rule of thumb (most common practice) is 2 per seat for high school students, 2-3 per seat for junior high/middle school students, and 3 per seat for elementary school students.

— Virginia Overland/Ray Merical

*End Reminders.*

## Region IV Happenings

Buster has been out and about this year at the Twin Falls County Fair and Rodeo in Filer, Con Paulos “Kids Safety Fair” in Jerome and Central Community Action Partnership in Twin Falls. He has been talking about School Bus Safety and reminding everyone that the buses are back on the road and to watch for the flashing red lights and stop arms. Now that schools are back in session, students are crossing the roadways when getting on and off of buses. He has also been talking about watching and thinking about rail grade crossings, reminding everyone to double check before crossing tracks to make sure no trains are coming, and reminding bus drivers to follow proper procedures when crossing rail grade crossings with a school bus.

Reminder that National School Bus

Safety week is coming up October 20 – 24th, 2008. The theme this year is “**Avoid Harm, Obey the Stop Arm.**” Districts should be planning a community safety awareness program to get the word out to the public that students are back in school and to be mindful of school buses loading and unloading students. Districts should promote School Bus Driver appreciation. Let’s do something in each district to recognize the efforts of the School Bus Drivers to transport students safely to and from school.

— Doug Scott

## Bullying



We all have been there one way or the other, having someone bully you, you bullying someone else, or being a witness to some else being bullied.

We have had classes (train the trainer) and we have gone to seminars on it, but yet bullying still runs rampant through out our society. You may ask yourself is it because we choose to ignore it, is it because we choose to look the other way, or is it because we just don’t want to deal with it?

Bullying is dangerous to the student being tormented not only to endure physical harm, but to the child’s confidence and self-esteem. Bullying is dangerous to everyone in the vehicle. Because of the close quarters, other students can easily be drawn into the action, either as additional victims or by peer pressure to be a bully

themselves. Bullying can distract the bus driver, increasing the risk of vehicular accidents that can severely injure students, other motorists and pedestrians. Bullying can also effect the student's education by making them afraid of going to school or riding the bus.

It is estimated that nearly one in five students is subjected to school bus bullying. That number is high so we have to learn what the warning signs are and start helping the student by stopping the bullying.

**Bus bullying signs include:**

- ▶ Fear of going to school or of riding the bus.
- ▶ Habitually delaying or otherwise deliberately trying to miss the bus.
- ▶ Continually asking for rides to school or finding excuses to ride with friends instead of on the bus.
- ▶ Ripped clothes, missing possessions or signs of physical abuse.

School bus bullying can affect a student their entire life. We want everyone to have a bully free bus ride to and from school, so please learn the signs of bullying and make a difference in a student's life.

— **Brad Jensen**

## School Bus Watch

TSA is no longer supporting school bus watch, which the majority of us never believed they were supporting anyway. The federal government is now contracting the entire program with a private contractor instead of the American Trucking Association. The new contractor is working with the three major national student transportation organizations to develop a new program. The school bus industry will have their own program that is to be more appropriate to school buses

and supported by the new contractor. Since ATA has been removed from the picture the number for you to call to report a potential highway security concern has been changed to 1-888-217-5902. Please, if you witness something that could be terrorist related call the new number and let TSA check it out. Once the new system is put in place we will replace your Idaho School Bus watch cards if they do not issue correct ones from the new contractor. Last but not least, continue to train your new drivers with the old Highway Watch program until the new one is developed and distributed. If you need any help please contact your regional SDE Transportation Specialist.

— **Ray Merical**

## Legislative Updates

Senate bill No. 1443, Idaho code 33-520 Change of Language: Policy governing Medical Inhalers or *Epinephrine Auto-Injectors*. The board of trustees of each school district, including charter districts, shall adopt a policy by **September 1, 2008**, permitting the SELF administration of medication administered by way of metered-dose inhaler by a pupil for asthma or other potentially life-threatening respiratory illness or by way of an epinephrine auto-injector for severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

Transportation supervisors should check with their local administration and board, for up to date instruction and responsibility in the process of assisting those students.

House bill No. 566, Idaho code 33-130 Change of Language:

Hired on or after: **July 1, 2008**, Criminal History check for school district employees or applicants for certificates or *Individuals having contact with students*.

This check at a minimum shall cover the following: Idaho bureau of criminal identification, the Federal bureau of investigation and Statewide sex offenders register.

School bus drivers have had this check done for some time, now others having unsupervised contact with students in a K-12 setting will need to comply.

— **Virginia Overland**

## The High Cost of Fuel

As everyone knows fuel costs are utterly ridiculous and there is little relief in sight. It is so bad that some school districts are actually canceling field trips and seriously considering cutting back on athletic trips. There is not much we can do about what a gallon of fuel costs but there are things we can do to help cut fuel costs for school districts. Really look at the way you and your fellow drivers actually drive. Are you accelerating too quickly from stops, tying up other traffic (including other school buses) at stops, or idling your bus more than necessary? Remember, accelerate gradually, let them by if you are causing delays that can be avoided, and never idle your bus more than is necessary, a five minute maximum is a good rule of thumb. If you see fellow drivers that are not following these simple ideas, remind them, and remember that every cent you save your districts in fuel they may be able to use in a class room.

— **Ray Merical**

## Steering Committee

The Student Transportation Steering Committee met in Boise on October 2-3, 2008. Minutes will be posted on the SDE student transportation website as soon as possible.

## PRIVATE PROPERTY AND SCHOOL BUSES

There seems to be a bit of confusion concerning the legality of school buses operating on private property. There is no statute or code that forbids a district from operating on private property but any districts that do so should contact their insurance carrier to ensure that their coverage includes their operating on private property. It would not be in a districts best interest to be accused of damaging someone's property while driving on private property and then find out you are not insured.

— Ray Merical

## NEW PEOPLE

### Angela Tracy

Angela is our new Student Transportation Administrative assistant. She started on September 29 and is still in the process of figuring out what student transportation really is and what she actually got herself into. Give her a call, welcome her aboard, and try not to scare her off before she has a chance to decide if she likes school buses. She doesn't have yellow blood in her veins yet, and if you want to ask her about what she really likes to do. You might be surprised.

# New Face, New Name: Please Vote!

We have decided to change the name of the newsletter. Below are the top three options and we want your input! Please cast your vote by e-mailing your favorite name of the three choices below to [atracy@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:atracy@sde.idaho.gov) by November 21st. The new name will take effect in our December 1st newsletter. Thank you and look forward to hearing from all of you!

- **Bus Hub**
- **Bus Bugle**
- **Bus Traveler**

